



# NEWSLETTER



## 2011 Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) Signup Underway, Deadline is June 1

Enrollment for the 2011 Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) has begun and will continue through **June 1, 2011**. The Farm Service Agency (FSA) urges producers to make use of the e-DCP automated website to sign up, or producers can visit the FSA office to complete their 2011 DCP contract. Eligible producers receive direct payments at rates established by statute regardless of market prices. FSA began to issue advance direct payments beginning Dec. 1, 2010.

## 2011 Average Crop Revenue Election Program (ACRE) Option: June 1 Signup deadline

The Average Crop Revenue Election Program (ACRE) provides a safety net based on state revenue losses and acts in place of the price-based safety net of counter-cyclical payments under DCP. A farm's payment is based on a revenue guarantee calculated using a 5-year average state yield and the most recent 2-year national price for each eligible commodity. The **June 1, 2011** deadline is mandatory for all ACRE and DCP participants. FSA will not accept late-filed applications. An ACRE payment is issued when both the state and the farm have incurred a revenue loss. In exchange for participating in ACRE, a farm's direct payment is reduced by 20 percent, and marketing assistance loan rates are reduced by 30 percent. The decision to enroll in the ACRE Program is irrevocable. The owner of the farm and all producers on the farm must agree to enroll in ACRE. Once enrolled, the farm shall be enrolled for that initial crop year and will remain in ACRE through the 2012 crop year.

## CRP General Signup 41 set for March 14 to April 15, 2011

General signup for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) began on March 14, 2011, and continues through April 15, 2011. During the signup period, Montana farmers and ranchers may offer eligible land for CRP's competitive general signup at their county Farm Service Agency (FSA) office. Through the 2008 Farm Bill, CRP is authorized for a maximum enrollment of 32 million acres. USDA estimates that contracts on 3.3 million to 6.5 million acres are scheduled to expire annually between now and 2014. Land currently not enrolled in CRP may be offered in this signup provided all eligibility requirements are met. Additionally, current CRP participants with contracts expiring this fall may make new contract offers. Contracts awarded under this signup are scheduled to become effective Oct. 1, 2011. In Montana, 2.9 million acres of the state's 18,721,501 cropland acres are actively enrolled in the CRP program. Of the state's active CRP acres; 498,661 acres are scheduled to expire on Sept. 30, 2011; 696,523 acres on Sept. 30, 2012 and 638,841 acres on Sept. 30, 2013. As administrator of the CRP Program, FSA will evaluate and rank eligible CRP offers using an Environmental Benefits Index (EBI) that assists in calculating the environmental benefits to be gained from the contract. The EBI consists of five environmental factors (wildlife, water, soil, air and enduring benefits). Cost factors are also entered into the equation. In addition to the general sign-up, FSA's CRP Continuous Sign-up Program is ongoing. Continuous acres represent the most environmentally desirable and sensitive land. For more info, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov) and view *Conservation Programs*.

## 2011 Acreage Reports Filing Deadline is July 15

County offices are in the process of getting the 2011 compliance map packets together for acreage reporting purposes. The compliance maps will be mailed or made available at the FSA county office for producers. Please follow the instructions closely for completing the maps to ensure that all the cropland and rangeland is reported if required for program eligibility. The deadline to file 2011 acreage reports is July 15, 2011.

### Teton County FSA Office

**April 2011**

**Address:**

**1102 North Main  
Avenue**

**Choteau, MT  
59422**

*\*Effectively immediately,  
our address has changed.  
Please begin using this  
address for correspondence  
with our office. THANKS!*

**Office:**

(406) 466-5351 ext. 2  
Fax: (406) 466-5328

**Website:**

[www.fsa.usda.gov/mt](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mt)

**Hours:** 8:30 to 4:30 p.m.  
Monday to Friday

**FSA Office Personnel:**

Gail Durocher ext. 112  
Ann Hall ext. 105  
Dana Sullivan ext. 109  
Pam Kramer ext. 110

**County Committee Members**

Dale Hanson Chair  
Alan Peace, Vice  
Deana Burgmaier, Member

**Agricultural Lending  
Opportunities:**

*Questions regarding obtaining  
credit to start or enlarge farming  
or ranching operation; financing  
agricultural operating expenses;  
or livestock, machinery  
purchases may call the  
following at (406)466-5351, ext  
107:*

Eric Gunderson FLO

## Spring Grazing on Conservation Reserve Program Acres

The 2011 grazing period for managed grazing of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres is March 15th through May 14th. CRP participants who want to graze their CRP contracts this spring must sign up at the FSA county office. Grazing cannot begin until the participant(s) receives written approval from the local FSA county committee or its designee. Spring managed grazing must end before May 15th, which is the start of Montana's Primary Nesting and Brood - rearing Season.

Participants may graze CRP acres based on the rotation period of once every three years and other limitations that are included in their Conservation Plan of Operations. Producers wishing to graze CRP acres must first receive written notification of approval from the FSA county committee before managed grazing can begin. Livestock producers, who rent or lease acreage from the CRP participant, shall sign a statement agreeing not to sublease the CRP acreage and receive notification of approval from the FSA county committee, a copy of which they should provide to the CRP participant. All livestock must be removed from the CRP acreage when the calculated AUM's are utilized, but no later than May 14th for spring grazing. CRP participants will be assessed a payment reduction for managed grazing which is calculated by taking the number of acres grazed, times the CRP per acre annual rental payment, times 25 percent.

## Current USDA Settlements and Non-Judicial Claims Process:

### Native American Farmers & Ranchers Settlement Agreement (Keepseagle)

If you are a Native American who was denied a Farm Loan or Loan Servicing by the USDA between Jan. 1, 1981 and Nov. 24, 1999, you may be eligible for benefits from a Class Action Settlement. To request a Claims Package or for more information, call 1-888-233-5506 or visit [www.IndianFarmClass.com](http://www.IndianFarmClass.com).

### Non-Judicial Claims Process for Hispanic & Women Farmers & Ranchers

If you believe that USDA improperly denied farm loan benefits to you between 1981 and 2000 because you are Hispanic, or because you are female, you may be eligible to apply for compensation. To register your name to receive a claims packet, call the Farmer and Rancher Call Center at 1-888-508-4429 or visit: [www.farmerclaims.gov](http://www.farmerclaims.gov).

### African American Farmers Settlement Agreement (Pigford II)

If you are an African-American farmer who (a) submitted a request to file a late claim on or between Oct. 13, 1999 and June 18, 2008, under the 1999 USDA settlement in the earlier class action known as Pigford v. Glickman ("Pigford"), and (b) who did not receive a merits determination of their discrimination claim, you may be eligible for benefits from a Class Action Settlement. For more information, call 1-866-950-5547 or 1-866-472-7826 or visit [www.blackfarmercase.com](http://www.blackfarmercase.com).

## Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program (SURE) Signup for 2009 Crop Year Underway, Ends July 29

Signup for the 2009 SURE program began on Jan. 10, 2011 and will end on **July 29, 2011**. To be eligible for SURE a producer must have at least a 10 percent production loss on a crop of economic significance and a policy or plan of insurance under the Federal Crop Insurance Act or the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for all economically significant crops. Producers considered socially disadvantaged, a beginning farmer or rancher, or a limited resource farmer may be eligible for SURE without a policy or plan of insurance or NAP coverage.

Producers that have a farming interest physically located in a county that was declared a primary disaster county by the Agriculture Secretary under a Secretarial Disaster Designation or a contiguous county and meet the above criteria are eligible for SURE. In the absence of the Secretarial Disaster Designation producers may be eligible if they suffer at least a 50% production loss on the entire SURE farm due to a natural disaster. For more information, contact the county office.

## Actively Engaged

USDA has amended the requirements of being 'actively engaged' in farming. These rules apply to eligibility for payments under the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) or Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE).

Normally the stockholder or a member of a legal entity **must** make contributions of active personal labor and/or active personal management for the farming operation. The contributions are to be performed on regular basis, must be identifiable, and separate from the contributions of others.

The exception to this rule for a stockholder or member of a legal entity only occurs when both of the following apply:

- At least half of the interest in the legal entity is held by stockholders or members who are providing active personal labor or active personal management; and
- The total direct payments received by the legal entity and each of the members can't exceed \$40,000.

## Livestock Indemnity Program

The Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) provides assistance to eligible livestock owners and contract growers for eligible livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather including losses due to floods, blizzards, disease, wildfires, extreme heat, and extreme cold. For 2011 losses, producers must file a notice of loss the earlier of either 30 calendar days of when the loss of livestock was apparent to the participant or October 31, 2011. A notice of loss can be reported to the office by phone, fax, or e-mail. To be considered eligible, livestock deaths must have died before October 1, 2011, and in the calendar year for which benefits are being requested. An Application for Payment may be filed at any time in 2011, but must be filed no later than 30 calendar days after the end of the calendar year in which the loss of livestock occurred.

Please contact the county office for additional eligibility requirements. A list of eligible livestock is available at [www.fsa.usda.gov/mt](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mt).

## Montana FSA Issued more than \$361 million in Fiscal Year 2010

From October 1, 2009 to September 30, 2010, the Farm Service Agency issued more than \$363 million in program payments and loans to Montana farmers and ranchers. The breakdown of the payments by program is as follows:

Program	Amount Issued
Conservation Reserve Program	\$105,156,654
Emergency Conservation Program	\$ 193,175
Grassland Reserve Program	\$ 108,528
Biomass Crop Assistance Program	\$ 1,490,649
Direct and Counter-cyclical Program	\$105,700,941
Average Crop Revenue Election Program (Direct Payments)	\$ 10,988,195
Commodity Loans, Loan Deficiency Payments and Farm Storage Facility Loans	\$ 89,239,121
Milk Income Loss Contract Program	\$ 590,840
Dairy Economic Loss Assistance Payment Program	\$ 743,796
Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program	\$ 36,365,559
Livestock Forage Program	\$ 7,019,846
Livestock Indemnity Program	\$ 3,964,683
Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bess and Farm-Raised Fish Programs	\$ 1,383,546
Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program	\$ 499,108
Farm Operating and Ownership (Direct and Guaranteed) Loans	\$ 73,079,000

A breakdown of the amount of FY' 2011 payments issued by county is available on the Montana Internet site at: [www.fsa.usda.gov/mt](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mt). The excel document is located on the left under "I Want To" View FY 2010 FSA Payments by State and by County.

## Farming Operation Changes

If you have bought or sold land, or if you have added or dropped rented land from your operation, make sure you report the changes to the office as soon as possible. You need to provide a copy of your deed or recorded land contract for purchased property. Failure to maintain accurate records with FSA on all land you have an interest in can lead to possible program ineligibility and penalties. Making the record changes now will save you time in the spring. Update signature authorization when changes in the operation occur. Please notify the County Office as soon as possible upon the death of a participant, landowner, or member of a participating entity, as it may be necessary to modify contracts for the current year or complete updated eligibility forms. Producers are reminded to contact the office of a change in operations on a farm so that records can be kept current and accurate.

## 2011 Pulse Crop rates

Dry Peas: \$5.13/cwt.      Large Chickpeas: \$11.28/cwt.  
Lentils: \$11.06/cwt.      Small Chickpeas: \$7.43/cwt.

## Filing a Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Notice-of-Loss

To qualify for assistance under NAP, production losses or prevented planting must have occurred as a result of an eligible cause of loss. An eligible cause of loss is any of the following: damaging weather, such as drought, freeze, hail, excessive moisture, or excessive wind; or adverse natural occurrences, such as earthquake or flood; or a condition related to damaging weather or an adverse natural occurrence, such as excessive heat, disease or insect infestation. Wildlife damage and weeds are **not** considered eligible causes of loss under NAP.

A notice of loss must be provided for prevented planting claims, within 15 calendar days after the final planting date. For low yield claims, the earlier of the following: 15 calendar days after the damaging weather or disaster occurrence or date damage to the specific crop acreage is apparent to the producer for yield losses; or 15 calendar days after the normal harvest date. If a Notice-of-Loss is filed after the established final planting date and the intent is to reseed to another crop intended for harvest, such as barley for grain, which is covered under crop insurance, a NAP payment cannot be received on the original failed crop.

Montana is not a double cropping state. If the intent is to destroy the crop, summer fallow it, or reseed to another crop **not** intended for harvest, representative strips must be left in the field so that a loss adjuster can be sent out closer to normal harvest time to appraise the original seeded crop. In this situation, the original seeded crop would still be eligible for a payment.

**July 15, 2011 is the final date for NAP participants to submit crop year 2010 production evidence for crops that were covered in 2010. Failure to submit this documentation may lead to a substantially reduced APH. For more info, contact the county FSA office.**

***The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its program and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotope, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.***

## Special Accommodations:

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in any FSA programs should contact the County FSA Office or the Federal Relay Service at **1-800-877-8339**.

**Selected Interest Rates - April 2011**

Farm Operating - Direct	2.75%
Farm Ownership - Direct	5.00%
Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.50%
Conservation Loan	5.00%
Emergency - Actual Loss	3.75%
Farm Storage Facility - 7-year	2.75%
Farm Storage Facility - 10-year	3.375%
Farm Storage Facility - 12-year	3.625%
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	1.25%

**FSA: Upcoming Important Dates to Remember:**

(COF add date here) NAP Pull Off Date

- April 15:** CRP "General Signup 41" Ends
- May 14:** Spring grazing on CRP acres ends
- May 15:** Beginning date of Primary Nesting Season
- May 31:** Final Date to Request 2010 Marketing Assistance Loans/LDPs on Corn, Dry Peas, Grain Sorghum, Lentils, Mustard Seed, Safflower Seed, Chickpeas, Soybeans, and Sunflower Seed
- May 30:** *CLOSED for Memorial Day*
- June 1:** 2011 DCP & 2011 ACRE Programs Signup Deadline
- July 15:** Acreage Reporting Deadline
- July 15:** 2010 ACRE Production Reporting Deadline
- July 15:** Final NAP Production Reports Due for 2010
- July 15:** Final date to file 2010 crop application for NAP Payment
- July 4:** *CLOSED for Independence Day*
- July 29:** SURE Sign-up Deadline for 2009 Crop Year
- Continues:** Continuous Conservation Reserve Program



**Newsletter**

**\*\*\*Montana FSA Notice to Current Newsletter Recipients\*\*\***

***Non-active agriculture producers must "opt-in" to receive future newsletters***

Effective March 1, 2011, the Montana Farm Service Agency has issued a new newsletter policy geared toward improving FSA newsletter delivery and efficiency to the individual farmers, ranchers and agriculture community. FSA newsletters will continue to be sent to active agriculture producers as determined by the county FSA offices. No action is needed for active producers unless your household or business is receiving duplicate newsletters in which case you should inform your local county FSA office. If you are not an "active" producer but are a landowner or are interested in receiving or continuing to receive a FSA newsletter, you must inform your local county office that you'd like to "Opt-in" and be added to the newsletter mailing list. In addition, you can choose to receive your newsletter electronically. Each newsletter not mailed saves the agency and taxpayer \$0.39. To request the electronic newsletter be emailed to you instead of receiving a newsletter through mail, please contact your county FSA office.

Information on programs administered by FSA in Montana, the 2011 FSA Program Handbook, state news releases and e-newsletters and individual county office newsletters are available at:  
[www.fsa.usda.gov/mt](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mt)